

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, BG, US

SUBJ: GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN ON DESIRABILITY OF US MILITARY
ATTACHE IN DACCA

1. AT CONCLUSION OF THIS MORNING'S WIDERANGING DISCUSSION,
DCMLA MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHAMN SAID HE WANTED TO BRING UP
A POINT, NAMELY THE POSSIBILITY OF USG ASSIGNING A MILITARY
ATTACHE TO BANGLADESH.

2. HE SAID THE US POSITION HAD BEEN EXPLAINED TO HIM
BY AMBASSADOR BOSTER BUT NOW QUESTION WAS CIRCULATING
MORE ACTIVELY WHY DID THE AMERICANS NOT HAVE AN ATTACHE
HERE WHEN THE INDIANS AND SOVIETS EACH HAVE SEVERAL, SOME
EVEN AT BRIGADIER LEVEL.HE DID NOT THINK THEY NEEDED
OR SHOULD HAVE SO MANY, BUT RECOGNIZED IT WAS A CARRYOVER
FROM 1971-72 AND SUGGESTED BDG DID NOT WISH TO MAKE AN
ISSUE OF IT NOW. HE SAID THE FEELING WAS THAT THE
PRESENCE OF AN AMERICAN ATTACHE WOULD BE DESIRABLE QTE
EVEN WITHOUT EXPECTATIONS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE UNQTE.
HE SAID HE HOPED THE UK WOULD SEND AN ATTACHE BACK. HE NOTED
THAT BIG, ESPECIALLY SUPER POWERS, OFTEN HAD ATTACHES IN
COUNTRIES WHERE THEY HAD LITTLE POLITICAL INTEREST. BUT
BANGLADESH, HE ADDED, IN FACT OCCUPIES AN IMPORTANT STRATEGIC
POSITION. WITHOUT REHEARSING THE POINT MADE IN ANOTHER PART
OF BROADER CONVERSATION, HE WAS ALLUDING TO HIS PERCEPTION OF
ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE STABILITY OF EASTERN IANDIA AND THE
WHOLE OF THE SUBCONTINENT.

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3. I TOLD HIM I COULD ONLY ECHO WHATEVER AMBASSADOR BOSTER HAD SAID ON THIS SUBJECT REGARDING THE ECONOMIC/HUMANITARIAN THRUST OF OUR ROLE HERE. I SUGGESTED THAT THE ISSUE MAY HAVE ARISEN AGAIN DURING AMBASSADOR BOSTER'S RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND WE MIGHT AWAIT HIS RETURN FOR ANY UP-TO-DATE REPLY TO HIS QUESTIONS.

4. COMMENT. THE FACT THAT HE CHOSE TO SAY THIS WAS DESIRABLE EVEN WITHOUT THE EXPECTATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE STRONGLY SUGGESTS HE VIEWS THIS AS PART OF THE BDG'S WIDENING EFFORTS TO BE IN BALANCE. BUT THIS MUST ALSO BE READ ALONG WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN'S REMARKS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE YESTERDAY.
CHESLAW

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NNN

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